Australian Bureau of Statistics

6220.0 - Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia, Sep 1998

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ABS: 3.6 million Australians not in the labour force

There were approximately 3.6 million people aged 15 to 69 who were not in the labour force (i.e. neither employed nor unemployed) in September 1998, an Australian Bureau of Statistics survey released today has shown.

While this represents a 2% decrease from the previous year, the number of people who were marginally attached to the labour force increased by 3% to 922,600, the highest level recorded since the survey began in 1975. 'Marginally attached to the labour force' is a term used to describe those not in the labour force who were either actively looking for work but were unavailable to start work in the survey reference week, or were not actively looking for work but available to start work within four weeks.

Of persons marginally attached to the labour force, 94% were not actively looking for work but were available to start work within four weeks, and 6% were actively looking for work but were not available to start work.

There were an estimated 110,900 discouraged jobseekers in September 1998, a decrease of 6% since September 1997. Discouraged jobseekers are people who want to work and are available to start work, but are not doing anything to find a job mainly because they believe that employers consider them too young or too old (37%), or that there are no jobs available in their locality or line of work (27%).

Most discouraged jobseekers were female (67%). Almost two-thirds of these women were aged 35 to 59 years. Male discouraged jobseekers tended to be older, with 65% aged 55 to 69.

There were a further 655,800 people who wanted to work and were available to start work within four weeks, but were not actively looking for work because of personal or family reasons. For these people, the most common reasons for not actively looking for work were 'childcare' (32%), 'attending an educational institution' (29%) and 'own ill health, injury, physical disability or pregnancy' (15%).

Government benefits or cash pensions were the main source of income for half of the people not in the labour force. A further 38% reported having no income or relying on someone else's income. Although 66% of those not in the labour force were female, they accounted for 77% of people reporting no income or relying on someone else's income.

Copies of the publication **Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia, September 1998** (cat. no. 6220.0) are available from ABS Bookshops. Main features of the publication may be found on this site.

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